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The Disposition of the Turkish Empire

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THE disposition of the territory now composing the Turkish Empire does not dispose of the Turk. Nearly all plans for the division of Turkey into new states overlook the fact that the Moslem population of Turkey is at least four-fold the Christian population. Force from without would be necessary to disfranchise and hold down the Moslem—a task which the Christian population would be wholly unable to achieve. This Christian population is certain to be in a majority in only sections of the Turkish Empire in Asia. In but one of the vilayets or departments in Asia Minor, namely Smyrna, it is in a fair majority of about 50,000 in a population of 750,000. In nearly all other parts of the littoral of Asia Minor the Turk holds a majority in every unit save possibly one city, Trebizond. The Armenian is in the minority in every vilayet and in every city except two and these are smaller sized. The Armenian provinces of Russia added to the Turkish vilayets, in which there is a strong proportion of Armenians, give a total in favor of the Armenians. In Syria the Moslem is in a majority of at least four, probably five, to one. Taking the country around Syria and Palestine a vote would place a Moslem government in control. In Syria, however, the Moslem population is Arab. In Armenia, with small fractions of Turks, the Moslem population is Kurdish. In Asia Minor, out of a population of 10,000,000 there are about 7,000,000 Turks. These fill the center of Asia Minor so completely that the Christian population is negligible; they are in a majority along the entire coast districts of Asia Minor, except part of the Cilician plain, already pointed out as Smyrna, the vilayet of which it is the center, and Trebizond.

This population of 7,000,000 Turks is the core and power, the strength which has given the Ottoman race its supremacy in the Ottoman Empire. However, the question presented by Turkey cannot be limited by Turkey. The Turkish race began to play its part in history in 732 A. D., when it was a strong and fully

organized state on the borders of Kansu, a northeastern province of China. It already had a written language, a language still spoken by the Youruks of Asia Minor. This race expanded until it reached Constantinople on one side and Peking on the other, and there have been periods in which it ruled both and all the lands between.

It is possible today to start from the gates of Scutari, a suburb of Constantinople, and ride to the gates of Peking and in the long journey of 9000 miles never be more than two days from a village in which Turkish is spoken. No other tongue in the world has this span. No other has so nearly preserved its solid foundation of ancient Turkish, and assimilated a vocabulary for the purposes of faith and philosophy drawn from Arabic in its roots, and in administration and in letters from Persia. The only language which compares with it in this lingual structure is English, with its basis of Saxon, its addition of Norman and French and its assimilation of a great vocabulary obtained directly or indirectly from the two classic tongues of antiquity. This Turkish race once held Asia in fee. It has ruled in China, it conquered the Abbaside, Caliphate in Bagdad in the eleventh century, and four and a half centuries later it reached the Danube. Even three centuries ago, there was a period when different branches of this race were dominant from the headwaters of the Danube to the mouth of the Amur. Cruel, relentless, murderous, stained with historic crimes, no race with the record, with the staying power, the independence, the sobriety and the decision of the Turk can be set aside as negligible in the history of the world. Tolerant in the period from the fifteenth to eighteenth century—when European countries remorselessly crushed all dissenters, from the expulsion of the Moors and Jews from Spain to the expulsion of the Huguenots from France—Turkey tolerated in its empire races alien in language, in religion and in culture. Among them the Armenian was the oldest and most powerful, and still possesses ability and knowledge, unmatched by any other race in the Turkish Empire.

The result of this early tolerance was that Turkey has been guilty in this very decade of massacre and deportation, once familiar in Europe, but now justly condemned. The Turk has lost the right to rule. He is condemned by the civilized world. He will never

be allowed to exercise political power or rule in our generation over any subject race.

But it is not possible either to deport or to massacre the Turk. He remains the largest single factor in the Turkish Empire, 7,000,000 strong in the field and cities of Asia Minor. While other races are nowhere in an unbroken majority, the Turk covers the center of Asia Minor and at more than one point overflows to its coast. Ignorant, without mercy, likely to explode in massacre, knowing nothing of modern civilization, he has been led to destruction by those of his own race who were "Made in Germany." The failure of the Turkish Empire began when Abdul Hamid sent his young officers to be trained in German military schools and added relentless methods of Prussianism to the sporadic and fanatic massacre.

If the Turkish Empire were held together and administered as a whole the Turkish race would surely but slowly come to the front. If the Turkish Empire be divided, there will remain in the central strategic point of Asia Minor a race which multiplies as fast as other races—some think faster—solid, calm, warlike, but needing civilization in order to equal that period in its past when it assimilated the art and letters of Persia, the faith and philosophy of the Arab, and the law and administration of the Roman Empire.

A recent proposal from England is that the Turks of Asia Minor shall be organized as a protected state under the rule of the house of Seljuk—whose last representative still lives at Konia (though at present an exile at Beirut) and represents the ancient glory, the serene faith and urban manners of the old Turk. Such a state would be not unlike the realm ruled by the Nizam of Hyderabad in India and it would be twice as large in area. It would have a far stronger population and in another generation its army would be the strongest within the current boundary of Turkey. The presence of such a Moslem state, once its leaders were educated and its people had gained the advantages of civilization, would be a perpetual menace to all the Christian states about it. It would have sympathies with Bulgaria and Hungary. It would be the hope of the Moslem populations of the empire. Nothing but a league of nations strong enough to suppress war could prevent an eventual explosion.

This central kingdom looking out on the Mediterranean, the

Aegean and the Black Sea would be also the natural center, the leader of the entire Turkish race across Asia. This race today—ignorant for the most part, without laws, with a Moslem faith for many still little more than superstition, and an economy and culture similar to that of a thousand years ago—would in due time develop a spirit of race. The Turkish question then would loom large across the whole distance which separates the Far East from the Near East. The first consciousness of this is apparent in the attempt at a union between Afghanistan and the Central Asian Khanates.

Whatever solution we propose we come back to the great fact that the disorganized condition of Turkey is such that any arrangement which does not provide a fostering rule for all these different races and tongues, until education and civilization have made federation possible, renders certain some collision in the future. This is certain whether Turkey be divided into integral or autonomous parts, or be partitioned among many European nations, or part partitioned, and part held under European flags, Constantinople meanwhile being an internationalized city.

The primal difficulty through all this is that the Turkish Empire is not an accident, but an integral and economic unit composed of the plateaus, of Armenia, of Kurdistan, of Asia Minor; an Asian steppe dotted with lakes, with its two rivers of Mesopotamia, and last the Syrian coasts. For prosperity, for development, for civilization and for lasting peace these different portions need each other, and have not in a history of four thousand years ever been separated without a final and inevitable union.

Divide the Turkish Empire and economic disaster is inevitable. Divide it between European powers and in due season you will have a group of Polands. Set Christian minorities long subject to govern warlike Turkish majorities and explosions will follow. Carve out, as can be done by adding Russian Armenia to Turkish Armenia, an area with narrow Armenian majorities and an unstable equilibrium is certain, with a costly rule entailing heavy taxes. Do this in Asia Minor for vilayets partly Greek and you will have between these two unstable areas, a solid Moslem population, certain to gravitate to an *irredenta* movement and worse than Balkan wars will follow. Imagine the area from Maine to Nebraska and Dakota with New England 45 per cent Moslem ruled by 55 per cent Greek,

and in Minnesota and Iowa 55 per cent of Armenians ruling 45 per cent of Moslems and the region between pretty nearly solid Moslem with 10 per cent Christian. Would there seem to you a stable basis for peace in the future over such a region without schools or railroads and embittered by racial and religious wars for a thousand years? Map drawing will not solve this problem.

None of these difficulties, however, is any excuse or pretext for Moslem rule over any Christian populations. This cannot be. As German and Austrian have forfeited the right to rule any subject races, so has the Turk for worse reason and greater crimes. Germany and Austria at least brought order and a more advanced civilization. Not the Turk. He has destroyed all that he built. His economic failure is as complete as his administration by massacre. The Turkish Empire is gone, never to return. The Turk remains, economically incapable. His taxation of subject races is as ruinous as his pillages. Great in a distant past, he has no future until schools, justice and order have again developed his race. Today he is without modern economic assets of any kind, except a dagged industry in the field and some capacity as a retailer in the city. Into the modern economic world, he has never entered. His religion itself is a bar. Trader in the dawn of his race, he has not advanced.

The Turkish Empire has gone after six centuries, four of conquest and two of defeat. Turkish territory remains, offering the world's most insoluble problem—racial, civil and economic. Both race and territory are bankrupt. Here is an area as large as New England, the Middle States, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Nebraska. It includes lands as fertile, mineral resources, except in coal, as great. It has the only coal in the Mediterranean. It holds a situation without parallel on the earth's surface, linking three continents, connecting the seas of Central Asia, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, and offering the shortest sea and rail route from the two great city centers of Asia in China and India with the great city center of Europe from Moscow to London. No possibilities today are greater and no reality more desperate. A census does not exist. Estimates based on poll-tax returns, corrupt, unreliable, manipulated, run to a population for this entire region of 20,000,000 in most books of reference. The calculation made

ten years ago, when for a brief season there was sanity, purpose and patriotism in the conduct of Turkish affairs at Constantinople, reduced the familiar estimate of 20,000,000 to 15,000,000. Today, I believe the population of Turkey is not more than 10,000,000. The land is empty. The war alone has cost 1,000,000 lives in hostile operations. Massacres, famine and pestilence have slain at least 3,000,000 at the lowest and most moderate estimate. Refugees come back to tell me that a city which I knew in childhood with 40,000 inhabitants has but 6,000, with empty houses where dogs are devouring the dead, under the great basalt walls behind which Bdisarius withstood the shock and assault of Sapor, 1,400 years ago. In Mosul, cannibalism was rife last winter and the remains of six children, used for food were found in one house. "I do not expect you to believe this," runs a letter, "but I speak of what I know and have seen." The country-side is empty; brigandage is rife; the fields untilld. Great wastes stretch between what were once the lines of Russian, Turkish and English troops fighting for the empire for four years, wastes once populous.

This whelming disaster leaves this entire region without resources. Domestic animals are gone, neat cattle, horses, mules and asses destroyed for army food and transport, fruit trees ruthlessly cut under the direction of German officers to keep moving the solitary railroad which connects the capital with the interior and beyond to Arabia and its branches, a line 3,000 miles in all for a region that would cover our maps from Maine to the Mississippi. (The aggregate mileage of Massachusetts and Connecticut spreads over 600,000 square miles or eleven of our states.) By Moslem law, fruit trees have been sacred in war for 1,200 years and were spared when massacre swept away population. The German officer spared nothing. The entire area has been swept of metals. Fire has taken whole quarters of cities. Irrigation channels are dry. Seed-corn is absent. In whole districts everything woven has been seized to clothe troops. German system added to Turkish cruelty has left a land naked, peeled and forsaken.

At best in peace, Turkey was poverty-stricken. The vain effort was made to raise \$125,000,000 of revenue at the rate of \$10 a head of the population, when \$5 would have been rapacity.

Even Egypt raises only \$8 per head after thirty-eight years of English administration. Of Turkish revenue 43 per cent went to a debt charge yearly growing. Every efficient means of raising revenue was turned over to European usurers who sucked the life-blood of the realm. Germany has added to all these heavy charges for war-supplies. The aggregate of the Turkish debt none can know. Of the interest on the old debt 62 per cent goes to French bondholders and 29 per cent to German. French concessions siphon off all the profits of the trams and the wharves of the ports. Such railroads as there are, have for twenty years paid bondholders at the expense of development and equipment. The Turkish government has been corrupt and cruel, but no administration the world over has ever functioned under such pressure of foreign plunder. This was worked under a machinery of bond and treaty pushed inexorably by diplomatic pressure. All the embassies looked only to the spoils of their nationals and their bond concessions, privileges and opportunities under tariffs, exemptions and extraterritorial courts, always partial, and often corrupt which gave the lands, the investments, the industries and the products of Turkish subjects neither growth nor profit, neither justice nor protection.

If Armenia be given a bare preponderance of Armenians by including Russian Armenians in a territory of about a quarter of Turkey, it will not for years be able to raise a revenue sufficient to meet current expenditures for civil necessities, let alone the needs of a costly armed gendarmerie to keep savage and armed Kurds—long superiors—in order. Syria has but fifteen persons to the square mile to tax; its 1,454 miles of railroads feeds 114,500 square miles (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Connecticut with the same area have 46,000 miles) and its coal costs \$41 a ton—though oil in the new region opened by England in the Kerbuk Bagdan and Karun River oil-fields will give Turkey all the fuel wanted at a cheap rate. Here, as elsewhere the future of all this territory is secure, if it can once be freed from usurious European bondholders who have rolled up a debt of \$750,000,000 to which Germany added \$204,000,000 in the war. As it stands, at par value the debt would be \$1,000,000,000, or \$500 per family on a population of not more than 10,000,000 starving, in dire poverty and without resources.

Kept together or divided, the territory of the Turkish Empire cannot be given an administration capable of sustaining development unless there is a large provision of new capital, whose future and whose security is certain, but whose credit and whose revenue must be provided for a decade to come or even more. This is the basic difficulty of the Turkish situation. Order can be easily gained and maintained. Conflicts between races and creeds can be adjusted. National aspirations can be secured by autonomy and local self-government until economic prosperity has come. The real difficulty is one of providing the capital by which any development is possible. This is not a new or untouched source, or one possessing forests, or vast water power. It is instead a territory long since cropped to the limit. In it is an area which could raise 300,000,000 bushels if it were once irrigated; it has mineral resources which made it the early center of the development of metals through all the period before the Christian era, but a rainfall barely sufficient for cultivation and needing the opening of irrigation on a great scale, and by provision in the shape of cattle and machinery yet to be made for either agriculture or manufacture.

These economic causes, not less than the jealousies between the European powers have led to the movement beginning in England and accepted by all Western Europe, proposing that the United States should be the mandatory to which the administration of the Ottoman Empire should be made. All the European countries are already carrying a debt which make new issues impracticable. The heavy losses of war have made all their man-power needed at home and they are without the capital necessary to develop a region whose development cannot for at least ten years meet the ordinary charges of government.

If the region is divided into different areas—Armenia, Mesopotamia and Syria—if the interior of Asia Minor is going to the Turks, and the coast parceled between different powers, whether this division be between European Powers, or between subject races, the same difficulties are to be met, and the same economic needs to be provided. The instant these divisions are made questions arise sure to cause contention in regard to the proposed boundaries of Armenia, of Syria and of Asia Minor. In brief, it leaves the interior of Asia Minor in the hands of the Turks, and the coast under other powers an arrangement doomed to economic failure.

If Asia Minor be parceled into a Greek end to the West, an Italian colony in the South, and some division along the Black Sea, its railroad development will be impossible except with the costly lines that come from the competing and conflicting management of transportation. Whether this should be done on the basis of giving the Christian minority a rule over the Ottoman majority, or the effort be made to furnish Christian majorities by gathering the Turkish population into the center of Armenia and frankly accepting the majority of the Moslem in Syria, the same racial and economic difficulties will exist. The country instead of having one Balkan peninsula as in the past forty years—source of innumerable woes—will have a Balkanized area in the center of Europe, another Balkanized area in the Balkans, and a third Balkanized area in the Turkish dominion.

Next November it will be one hundred years since American missionaries first landed in Turkey. During that period the American and his nation have been known only for works of mercy, of healing, charity, of education and of faith. The college education of Turkey in its most efficient shape is in the hands of American colleges endowed by this country. Every city has its American hospital. All creeds and all races have confidence in the American. The United States is the only land which is looked upon as unselfish, having no ambitions, and representing a system which desires not empire over the earth, but freedom in the world.

This sentiment is so strong that it alone would be more valuable in maintaining order than soldiers or gendarmerie. The security for the capital which would be invested, which would not be less than four or five billion dollars, would be the richest, the most fruitful and the best situated land on the earth's surface. What American administration can do has already been proved in the Philippines. Greater success would be met in Turkey. If this duty and this opportunity is declined—and the feeling against any enterprise of this order is strong in the United States—Turkey will be divided. The effort will be made to raise capital to organize governments, taxation will be heavy, resources will only be obtained at exorbitant rates of interest. Military expenditure will render a sound pledge as impossible as it has proved in the Balkan states, the army will play its share both in influence,

and in industrial development, jealousies will arise, and South-eastern Europe, and Southwestern Asia will again set the world in flames, as they have in the last five years. The United States, true to its traditions, will struggle to remain out of the whirlpool of war, it will fail as it has already failed, and in the end it will expend far more than would be necessary for the peaceful solution of the problem of the Turkish Empire. It would have only a debt charge to show instead of a new guarantee of peace in the solution of the Eastern Question through justice, science and the establishment of judicial rights.